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COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP FOR SANT AKALI DAL ENVISAGED

Need For Unity Among All Akali Factions

After the sad demise of Sant Fateh Singh and Sant Channan Singh within a month, the Sant Akali Dal is faced with a crisis of leadership.

There is no towering personality who can easily fill the void left behind by the departure of the two stalwarts.

After achieving Punjabi Suba and getting the Akali Ministry installed in Punjab twice, Sant Fateh Singh had almost become a banyan tree under which nothing else grew. This hatred the emergence of an important leader to succeed him.

This was borne out a few months ago when Sant Fateh Singh was invited to become party president again or remain its supreme leader. The reason for recalling the Sant from retirement was that the party found itself in complete disarray after its defeat in the Assembly elections this year.

The Sant refused to take up the reins again. Then his nominee, Jathedar Mohan Singh Tur, was elected president despite some internal differences. It was then reckoned that Sant Channan Singh might remain as a symbol of unity but his failing health prevented him from either forging a united leadership or catapulting a new leader of recognised prominence. His death have created new difficulties.

Behind-the-scenes talks have recently been held to solve the crisis of leadership both in the Sant Dal and the SGPC.

The SGPC problem will more probably be solved for the time being by accepting Senior Vice-President Kirpal Singh Chakshertiwala to hold the fort till February next when a new president is scheduled to be elected at the budget meeting of the organisation. The intervening period is bound to witness a tug-of-war. Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tauru, M.P., is likely to make a bid to capture the SGPC.

The future pattern of the Sant Dal is not clear yet. The final picture may yet take a few months to emerge.

To avoid an immediate struggle for power, a collective leadership of three or four is anticipated. This will include present president Jathedar Mohan Singh Tur, former Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal, and Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tauru.

If this comes to pass, it would be a synthesis, however assorted, of the main groups represented in the party.

Jathedar Tur is a symbol of the orthodox elements which draw their strength from the semi-literate, muscle-flexing Jathedars of early 20th century vintage.

Sardar Badal is the spokesman of the modern, educated youngmen who, fed up with the decades-old supremacy of the Jathedars, want to give a new shape and content to the party.

Sardar Tauru represents the radicals, with leftist leanings, who wish to trim the party's sails to the new prevailing winds of political rejuvenation, economic recasting, social overhaul, and religious reforms. Votaries of renaissance in all walks of life, they have been able to muster around them not only the have-nots but also the new generation of intellectuals.

Each one of these three groups is a force to reckon with. Their unity, though not impossible, looks like mixture of fire

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Akali No-Confidence Motion Against Zail Singh Ministry Defeated

CPI Wholly Responsible For This Failure

As expected, the first ever no-confidence motion against the Zail Singh Ministry in Punjab, tabled by the Akalis this week, has been defeated by a voice vote.

For this failure the CPI must take a big cap on the knuckles. It knew that with a strength of only 10 members in the 104-member Assembly, its no-confidence motion had not even the ghost of a chance of being admitted. Yet it tabled two motions of no-confidence and invited ridicule upon itself.

For reasons known to it, the CPI also refused to support the no-confidence motion tabled by Akalis both at the time of its admissibility and final vote. Of course, CPI leader Surpal Dang did make a vehement speech about the acts of commission and omission by the Ministry, thereby ending the era of New Congress-CPI honeymoon.

If the CPI had joined hands with the Akalis, there was a distinct possibility that several disgruntled New Congress MLAs and other parties would have added their votes to the Akali-CPI strength of 36 votes.

As such, the motions of no-confidence were an exercise in futility, though they did succeed in focussing public attention on the "misdeeds" of the Zail Singh Ministry.

The Akali motion of no-confidence, tabled by Sardar Ajaib Singh Sandhu and Sardar Surjit Singh Barnala, listed a dozen charges against the Ministry, prominent among them being repressive and terror-striking policy and failure to maintain law and order and arrest price rise.

Sardar Sandhu charged that Punjab had been converted into a "police state". Mr. Dang accused the Government of having retreated from its commitments on economic policies.

In his reply, Giani Zail Singh charged the Akalis with fomenting trouble during the student agitation. He claimed the police had held its hand despite grave provocations and was maintaining law and order. He quoted figures to show that incidence of crime had declined during the last nine months. He also declared that the Ministry would implement all its economic commitments.

The Ministry has survived the first challenge to its life.

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and water, which cannot be tasting.

Others are equally keen to share power. Their ambitions will come to the surface in the near future.

The most redeeming feature is that most of the leaders are keen to avoid any open conflict at this stage.

There are also attempts to ensure unity in the party ranks, which is a very good sign.

Efforts to bring the various Akali factions together have not met with any tangible success so far. Rumours that former Chief Minister Gurnam Singh will be readmitted into the Sant Dal have been officially denied. But this does not rule out the possibility of some overtures to him having been made.

Though Sardar Gurnam Singh's betrayal twice of the Akali Legislature Party in Punjab cannot be easily forgotten or forgotten, yet in politics there cannot, and must not, be permanent enemies or friends. There are only permanent interests.

And the interests of the Panch demand that all the Akali factions must bury their hatchets and come together for the common good and prosperity of Sikhs everywhere.

The attitude of the Master Pheruman flock is still an unknown quantity. While Sardar Gurnam Singh is amenable to reason and appears willing to shake hand with the Sant Dal, Mrs. Nirlep Kaur is allergic to any move which shall rob her of the crown of leadership of even a truncated, much-cut group. It has now been reduced to the form and the status of the proverbial Dutch army—all generals and no soldier.

The Gurnam Singh Group has been dead for long. And the former Chief Minister must be rueing his lot. The Chief Ministership eluded him last year after he decided to stab the Badal Ministry in the back. This year he set his gaze on a Governorship. Even this is now beyond his grasp. He should be a wiser man, and must realise that the New Congress Party utilised him to scuttle the Akali Ministry and after this job had been accomplished, he has been thrown on the dung-heap of history exactly in the same manner as a man throws away a lemon after its juice has been extracted and its utility exhausted.

With this disillusionment with New Congress, it also comes the realisation that interests of all Sikhs, leaders and the rank and file, lie in strengthening a united Akali Dal, we should consider ourselves fortunate.

May be the slaps of time, kicks of fate, slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, and the cruel hands of death which wrested the two Sants away in a month will force all Akalis to cast away their personal prejudices and come together soon.

Story Of Punjab Freedom Fight In Pictures Presented To Prime Minister

Gyani Zail Singh, Punjab Chief Minister, presented this week in New Delhi to the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, an album in two volumes depicting in pictures Punjab's contribution to freedom struggle.

The album contains pictures and photostat copies of documents as displayed in the Punjab pavilion in Asia-72 as homage to the martyrs and freedom fighters.

The Prime Minister greatly appreciated not only the collection of facts and figures but also the hard work put in to find them out and in presenting them in a manner which will be of permanent value.

The Punjab Government, it is learnt, proposes to maintain them as a permanent record for historians, as the documents, many of them salvaged from rare sources, are of great value to the State and the country. It also plans to show them to school children and college students through mobile cinema units.

The freedom struggle in Punjab, as depicted in the album, opens with the history of the son of the soil and a rebel saint, Maharaj Singh, who emerged following the Anglo-Sikh wars of 1845-46. The story ends in 1947 with the achievement of national freedom.

The selections of photos and documents present contending versions of facts and analyses are present a perspective of history and some interpretation. Efforts have been made by the authors of the display to present objective and authentic data to the youth of India on topics, motivations for the freedom-fights, the organisation for achieving these objectives, the sources of leadership and the impact. No conclusion has been attempted but the selectors of pictures and documents presents the mood of the time and the mood of the events and people.

Step by step it unfolds Punjab's sacrifices for the freedom of the country, the rise of the rebel saint, Maharaj Singh, the Kuka movement and the agrarian agitation which is the first peoples movement which threw up new young leadership and made the Punjabee a rebel.

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Thought from Gurbani

What is humble shall be exalted
The branches of a fruit-laden tree
Bend low to the earth ;
Let us build the Temple
Lower than all.

—Guru Arjan Dev

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MOUSE-TRAP

In his zeal to retain in Punjab the Abohar-Fazilka belt which is to be transferred to Haryana under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's decision of January 29, 1970, Punjab Chief Minister Zail Singh has allowed himself to be stampeded into a mouse-trap over the immediate fate of Chandigarh ; this City Beautiful is to revert to Punjab before January 29, 1975. Shortly after assuming office early this year, the Giani proposed a 10-year moratorium over all controversial issues so that Punjab and Haryana could "devote all their energies of their economic development". He held a series of meetings with Haryana Chief Minister Bansi Lal but the latter would not accept any deviation from the Prime Minister's decision ; by October this year the issue had assumed priority consideration with the involved parties throwing claims and counter-claims. The Centre, which sided with neither, had advised the Chief Ministers to settle the issue by mutual concurrence.

After the fierce controversy which raged till October, there is a sudden, enigmatic quiet ; neither Punjab nor Haryana leaders have uttered a single word about the issue during the last month and a half. There is widespread speculation that the two states have mutually agreed to impose a five-year moratorium on the controversy regarding Chandigarh's transfer to Punjab and that of Abohar-Fazilka to Haryana ; official circles in Haryana speak of a "temporary settlement" having been reached under advice from the Centre. To support this theory some quote the fact that Mr. K.C. Pant, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, gave no specific reply on December 7 to a question on the transfer of Chandigarh within the stipulated period of five years from Prime Minister's decision ; during his recent visit to Chandigarh, Union Planning Minister Dhar had seriously asked : "Is there any Chandigarh issue ?" The fresh vigour, with which the Chandigarh Administration has taken up the various projects intended to develop the city and the adjoining rural areas, lends weight to the belief that Chandigarh would continue as Union Territory ; formerly its officials has adopted a "care-taker" attitude.

The latest turn of things might give mental satisfaction to Giani Zail Singh in that he has frozen the implementation of a decision which, according to him, Sant Fateh Singh had eked out of Mrs. Gandhi under threat of self-immolation, but it is a disservice to Punjab. Chandigarh's transfer to Punjab was in no way linked with merger of Abohar-Fazilka with Haryana, even under Mrs. Gandhi's decision ; these were two distinct issues. The City Beautiful has to be Punjab's before January 29, 1975 ; transfer of Abohar-Fazilka area was tagged with the settlement of other claims and counter-claims of Punjabi speaking and Hindi-speaking border areas, for which a commission of linguistic experts is to be appointed. Now by linking Chandigarh's fate with that of Abohar-Fazilka, the Giani has created a bigger mess.

We have always held that Abohar - Fazilka is Punjabi-speaking area, as only 12 of the 144 villages involved are Bagri - speaking ; the way a one-mile corridor was carved out to ensure the area's contiguity with Haryana was an open attempt to bolster up Bansi Lal Ministry's prestige at the cost of Akali Ministry of Sardar Gurnam Singh in Punjab. The Giani should have used all his tact and persuasive power to retain Abohar - Fazilka in Punjab on merits without compromising on Chandigarh's future. Mr. Bansi Lal seems to have got his bread buttered on both sides which the Giani has been left with a dry and stale chapatti to lick at and eat.

Thus Spake Guru Nanak

The sun and the moon, O Lord!
Are Thy lamps in the Heaven,
Which is Thy salver, And the lights
Move round and round Thee,—Beloved !

The orbs of the little stars
Are even as the pearls which shine,—
An offering unto Thee,—Beloved !

The winds move on to bless Thee ;
And all the forests are Thy flowers,
O Lord of Light,—Beloved !

How wonderful is this worship !
Breaker art Thou of the wheel of birth and death !
Thou hast a million eyes,
And yet no mortal eye !
A million lotus-feet art Thine,
And yet no mortal feet !
A million forms hast Thou,
And yet no mortal form,—Beloved !

From Thy radiance is radiant everything ;
By the light which from Thy Face doth flow
The stars shine on ; Thou art
The Soul, the Life, the Light of all,—Beloved !

When the Guru is nigh
To teach and to bless,
The Inner Light,—the Light divine,—
Verily, is revealed,—Beloved !

As the bee is ravished with the flower,
So ravished is my mind
With Thy lotus-feet ;
Night and day I thirst for Thee,—Beloved !

Give Thou, O Lord ! the holy water of Thy grace
To this little bird,
The heart that thirsts for Thee.
O come, Beloved ! Come and bend on me
Thy beauteous face,
That I may in Thy Holy Name abide
For ever,—Beloved !

Translated by : Sadhu T.L. Vaswani

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Minority Safeguards Abolished

By : Sardar Hukam Singh

(Continued from our last week issue)

In the Draft Constitution the special safeguards for Minorities were contained in Part XIV, Sections 292 to 301. As this stood seats were reserved for Muslim Community and the the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes in every State and the Indian Christian Community in the State of Madras and Bombay. Provision was made for nomination to the Lok Sabha of two Anglo Indians. As for the services Section 296 read that "claims of all minority communities shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services" the Anglo Indians were specially protected (Section 297) to be recruited, for the first two years, on the same basis as on 15.8.1947 in specified departments. Then there was a Special Officer for minorities to "investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for minorities" and to report to the President or to the Governor of a State, as the case may be, upon "the working of the safeguard..." the President was authorised (Section 301) to appoint a Commission to "investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes" and to recommend any steps that were deemed necessary.

The reservation was abolished subsequently on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, Sardar Patel, the Chairman, gave the reasons for changing the earlier decisions: conditions have, however, vastly changed since August 1947, and the Committee are satisfied that the minorities themselves feel that in their own interests, no less than in the interests of the country as a whole, the statutory reservation of seats for religious minorities should be abolished."

Now this was not wholly correct. There is no doubt that Christian representatives had expressed themselves in favour of foregoing reservation of seats, the Parsis had never wanted it, but no other community had done that. The Scheduled Castes were adequately covered under the exception that they were not a religious minority, but only a part of Hindus. The Anglo-Indians were specially protected, the President having been authorised to nominate to the Lok Sabha, and the Governors in some States to do similarly, and their representation in certain services having been secured though temporarily. From among the minorities in Group A and B, worth any attention and consideration, only the Muslims and Sikhs were hit by this change. The Muslims had got Pakistan, and could not demur or protest. It was mostly Muslims from Provinces, where they were a minority, who had cried loudest and worked hardest for the attainment of Pakistan. The spokesmen of these Muslims had been left behind in the Constituent Assembly. They had, naturally, certain inhibitions and handicaps. A few turned over-night over-enthusiasts in proclaiming and preaching nationalism, one of these, Mr. Tajamal Husain, whose name has been mentioned, along with H.C. Mookerjee, so conspicuously by the Advisory Committee as two of those who proposed joint electorates, had made a very significant suggestion for national integration. He canvassed for jumbling together of names in such a manner that the religion of a person would become impossible to ascertain from his name alone. For instance he coined new names such as Mahesh Mohamad, Tajamal Narain, Harish Sedullah, Krishen Haki and Mahmud Singh, Ismail Chandra and so on.

There were others, who continued as Muslim Leaguers, but lay low for the time being at least, to let the flood of apathy pass over. Though they felt strongly, yet could not express frankly. If any of them did he was the victim of all kinds of assaults, and was plainly told that his place was in Pakistan, where he could go. This was enough to silence his tongue and suppress his feelings.

There might have been some justification for entertaining apprehensions about the Muslims, who had wanted Pakistan, and got it. But there could not be any cause for suspicion against the Sikhs. Yet it is a fact that the Sikhs became suspects and were treated as such by the Hindus with authority and without it. There was an upsurge among Hindus for revivalism. Suddenly they had been placed in a position of superiority, and demonstrated that by their behaviour.

Particularly in Punjab the position had been reversed by partition. Before partition the Sikhs had occupied a special position. The British favoured them because of their martial traditions, and utility for fighting in two world wars. A very large number, after demobilisation, or earning pensions, had been rewarded with grants of irrigated lands, and had become prosperous. They enjoyed respectability and high social status. In the villages owned by Muslims and Sikhs the Hindus were conspicuous only by their usurious ways of multiplying money with compound interest. Their social status was much lower.

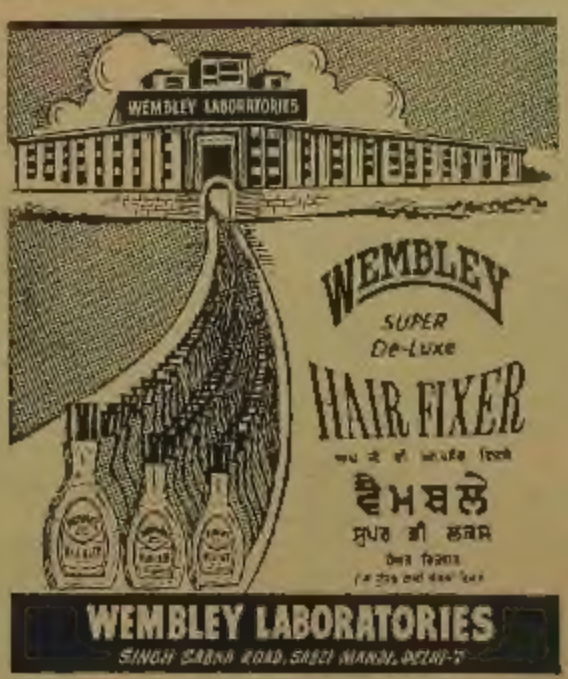
In East Punjab also the Sikhs were quite happy economically. Though the average holding was small, yet this was supplemented by the remittances from abroad, where they had emigrated, and from the savings of army officers and ranks. Then in every home there was, generally, at least one retired soldier who maintained good standards of living.

With partition tables were turned. The Sikhs had to leave their hearths and homes, the rich canal irrigated lands, their properties and valuables. Of course in this respect the Hindus suffered equally. But the latter had this comfort that after migration they turned from a minority to a majority, and because, politically, masters, to mould their future. On the other hand the Sikhs had been subdued to a position of inferiority. Naturally they felt bewildered and confused.

Whatever the Sikh leaders or Sikh representatives said to secure protection from a communal majority was dubbed as communalism and denounced as separatism. When reservation of seats provided in safeguards had been reviewed and abolished, and even small gestures of goodwill in social and economic spheres were sought to be confined only for Scheduled Castes I lodged a strong protest, and addressing the President said,

"So, I might be accused of communalism when I sound the discordant note. But I hold that this nationalism is not argument for vested interests. Even the aggressiveness of the majority would pass off as nationalism while the helplessness of the minority would be dubbed as communalism. It is very easy for the majority to preach nationalism to the minorities, but it is very difficult to act up to it....."

I charged the Congress and its leaders with breach of faith and breaking of promises in very strong words. Sardar Patel got indignant and devoted most part of his reply to my speech. He argued that the Sikhs in Advisory Committee (Sardar Ujjal Singh and Giani Kartar Singh) had given an undertaking in writing that the Sikhs would not plead for any other safeguard. If four of their Castes, Mazhabis, Ramdasias, Kabirpanthis and Sikligars, were included in the list of Scheduled Castes. Sardar Patel counter-charged me with breach of faith. I had absolutely no knowledge of any such undertaking by those Sikh representatives. The difficulty was probably due to Sardar Ujjal Singh and Giani Kartar Singh ceasing to be members of the Constituent Assembly after they had served on the Advisory Committee. This we would discuss further in the next issue.



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Ranjit Singh And His Generals

Consolidation

By + Lt. Col. Gulcharan Singh (Retd.)

(Continued from our last week issue)

During the early years of nineteenth century, Fateh Singh Kaliawala was one of the most powerful Sardars. It is said that once at Wazirabad, in order to find out the Sardar's strength, Ranjit Singh asked him to separate his troops. To the astonishment of the Maharaja, a major portion of the force then at Wazirabad, went with Kaliawala.

The Kaliawala was a brave, fearless and a skilful general; he had distinguished himself in almost all the campaigns launched by the Maharaja during the General's lifetime. He had fought against Jodh Singh of Wazirabad, Nidhan Singh and many others. He had participated in the campaigns for Kasur, Multan and Kangra and like a true soldier had died fighting on the battle-field.

Besides, he was a popular general. Many Sardars, such as Amar Singh Sandhanwalia, Dal Singh Naharna, Dhanna Singh Malwai, Fateh Singh Mattu and Uttam Singh Chuchhi, considered it a matter of pride to fight under the command of the Kaliawala.

He was intelligent and a man of foresight. Ranjit Singh was extremely fond of him and his death came as a personal blow to the Maharaja. He was a seasoned and reliable adviser. It was mainly based on his advice combined with that of Faqir Aziz-ud-din's that Ranjit Singh had decided not to help Holkar who had come to Amritsar in 1805 as a fugitive, pursued by General Lake. Further, it is believed that while lying wounded near Nazimgarh, Fateh Singh Kaliawala is supposed to have counselled the Maharaja never to appoint any Jat Sikh to a position of authority about the court, but to confine them only to military service. The story may or may not be true, but the fact remains that Ranjit Singh did act on this principle. One could see his court full of Khatris, Brahmins, Muhammadans, but no Jat Sikh was ever given an important post at Lahore. This advice seems to have been rendered on account of the haughtiness and boisterousness of the Jat community combined with their being "impatient of education."

Tara Singh Gheba, the head of the Dallewalia *Misl* had also been killed during the battle of Nazimgarh in 1807. Taking advantage of this, Ranjit Singh despatched Mohkam Chand to annex all the estates of the Dallewalias, of a yearly revenue of about Rs. 7,00,000. After a stiff fight put up by the late Sardar's widow at Raheon fort, the defenders capitulated. As a reward for this, Mohkam Chand was awarded a *jagir* comprising of the areas of Rahon, Nakodar and Noushehra, worth a yearly income of about one and a half lakhs of rupees. Thereafter, the energetic Mohkam Chand crossed the Sutluj and proceeding with more zeal than discretion took over Anandpur and some of the adjoining villages.

In 1808, the Maharaja again diverted his attention towards the hills of the Panjab and exacted tribute from there. Coming down, he collected tribute from the chief of Gujrat.

During the same year, the Maharaja despatched an expedition (about 4,000 strong) under the gunner General Ghous Khan, and Sardar Hukam Singh to subdue Sardars Ariel Singh and Amir Singh, the Chiefs of Shekhupura who had created considerable disturbances in that area. The customary nominal command of the expedition remained with Prince Kharak Singh. The Sardars put up a stiff resistance; the walls of the fort could not be breached by the Lahore guns. This necessitated commissioning of the *Bhangian-di-tap*, the gun was used against one of the gates which was shattered into pieces. The Lahore troops entered through this gate and the fort was occupied. The fort was given as a *jagir* to Prince Kharak Singh with his mother Maharani Nakain as his guardian. The Maharani stayed there till her death.

Latif writes "Everybody had now seen the rising power and fortune of Ranjit Singh. He had conquered city after city and town after town, without being checked in any quarter in his ambitious career which appeared to be unlimited. He had got the better of the strongest leagues which had been formed against him; he had broken the power of the united confederations and humbled to the dust many proud families and tribes. His arms had conquered the countries between the old Hydaspes (Jehlum river) and the Beas, forming the Panjab proper, and even penetrated beyond the limits of the Panjab proper. The Afghans, who were left in possession of the north-west portion of the Panjab, the Sadozai family of Pathans, who held the province of Multan, and the hill raja of Kangra, had already felt the weight of his power, and were treated by him as ordinary vassals. His highest ambition now, as Maharaja of Lahore, was to unite all the Sikhs under one banner, and extend his sway from the banks of the Sutluj to the Jumna, and thus to absorb into his own dominions all the independent states encompassed by those rivers. Already his last two Sutluj campaigns had borne good fruit, and his successive inroads and victories had reasonably led him to hope that another season would see the whole country from the Sutluj to the Jumna annexed to his new kingdom of Lahore. He was munificent in his rewards and severe in his exactions. He was dreaded, if not loved, by his subjects, and respected by those around him. His power was absolute, and, from the chief of a State to the common soldier, every one implicitly obeyed him. The British envoy had personally observed how submissive the Cis-Sutluj rajas and other chiefs were to him. He had no cause to be attracted to the side of the English, whose interests he knew were adverse to his own, so far as the Cis-Sutluj States, the chosen object of his ambition, were concerned."

By then Napoleon's threat to the British had been averted and the European situation changed in favour of the British; consequently they changed their attitude towards the Lahore Darbar. On the other hand, and Maharaja's increasing power had created fear in the minds of the Malwa chiefs, who approached the British for protection. Taking advantage of this favourable situation and in order to confine the Maharaja's exploits to the West and North of the Sutluj, the British offered him a treaty of friendship making the Sutluj as the eastern boundary of the Lahore kingdom, whereas Ranjit Singh wanted it to extend upto the Jamna. This also meant that all the Sikh States in the *Malwa* would come under the British protection. At Lahore, Metcalfe, the British envoy, also disclosed the news that General Ochterlony with a large force was already on his way towards Ludhiana. (He had crossed the Jamna on 16th January 1809 and reached Ludhiana on 18th February). Thus the Maharaja, who had hesitated to sign this treaty, was presented with a *fait accompli*.

A number of the Maharaja's *darbaris* were against taking this lying down. They included such personalities as Diwan Mohkam Chand and Akali Phoola Singh. They advocated measuring swords with the British, and went even to the extent of contacting the Marathas, Begum Samru and Rohillas. Faqir Aziz-ud-din counselled the Maharaja to accept the treaty and drop the idea of fighting as no one could assure victory against the disciplined and well trained troops of the Company who had tremendous resources at its disposal. This counsel combined with the cool-headedness of the Maharaja saved the situation. During the period of negotiations an incident took place which could have led to bigger consequences. Muharram of 1809 fell on 25th February, when Metcalfe with his escort, which had some Shia Muslims also, was at Amritsar. The Shias decided to take out a procession. On the other side, Akali Phoola Singh and many Akalis had also gathered there to celebrate *Holi*, which also happened to fall on the same day. While chanting "Hussain, Hussain" and going through the streets of Amritsar, the processionists arrived at the open space in front of the Golden Gurdwara, where the Akalis were saying their prayers. The Akalis asked the processionists to go elsewhere; arguments started from both sides, which led to a scuffle between the two parties. Ranjit Singh on hearing this, immediately came to the scene and averted the catastrophe. Although no one was certain as to which side fired the first shot, Metcalfe blamed Akali Phoola Singh for this.

According to Fakir Syed Waheed-ud-din, Akali Phoola Singh, who was against the proposed treaty of Amritsar and wanted the negotiations to breakdown had created this scene intentionally. He thought that by signing this treaty the Maharaja would compromise his position as an independent ruler. But, strangely, he by his actions, appears to have hastened the signing of this treaty, which took place at Amritsar on 25th April 1809 and is known as the Treaty of Amritsar. The treaty thwarted the Maharaja's ambition of bringing the whole of the Sikh nation under one banner, and also of extending his kingdom to the banks of the Jamna. The British were thus able to create a buffer state between the Lahore monarch and their own Indian Empire; it gave them an area for carrying on their nefarious activities against the Maharaja with whom they had avowedly signed a treaty of friendship. To the Maharaja, the treaty gave a free hand in other directions, and feeling his eastern flank secure, he went all out to extend his kingdom in all the other directions. This treaty also averted an open clash of arms between the British and the Lahore Darbar; or more appropriately, we may say it was postponed for some years.

(To be Continued)

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Bhai Vir Singh

A Profound Man Of God

By : Dr. Mohinder Pal Kohli

Thine abode is the bank of the river
And the thick forests,
Thou wast meant to soar heavenwards
And warble in solitude,
O why hast thou fallen in tumultous din
Surrounded by the weary tasks!

When Puran Singh, himself a poet of great merit, published his *Spirit of Oriental Poetry* (Trubner's Oriental Series) in 1926, he dedicated it to Bhai Vir Singh, whom he called a disciple poet and an epoch in himself. "With him" he writes, "begins the most modern Punjabi language; he gives it a new style, a new rhythm and a new flow." Bhai Vir Singh dominated Punjabi literature for about half a century, a towering Titan, a profound man of God known not for the cleverness of mere word painting and the power of story telling, not even for its humanitarian passion, but for his mystic visions illumined by the deep realisation behind it. He is essentially a spiritual poet, a lyricist of Divine love, imparting to man a vision of unity that underlies the diversity of phenomena and an awareness of the coherence behind the apparent incoherence of things. Born on December 5, 1872 this Sikh savant steeped in classical erudition, pained at the decadence of the Sikhs, throughout his literary career aimed "to propagate and disseminate the teaching of the Gurus and to restore Sikhism to its pristine glory." Under the influence of Singh Sabha combined with his inherited love for religion, he stood a little aloof in the atmosphere of general upsurge of the cultural ferment that led to the consequent effervescence. Yet he was a little removed from the conventional past and bridged the gulf between the old and the new by introducing new themes that do not conform to the known models of the past. The literature that he has left is full of transcendental inspiration and divine intuition, and we have glimpses of our intimacy with the beautiful creation of the Vast Unknown, the very substance of our existence.

Bhai Vir Singh responded to the new atmosphere initiated by the protagonists of the Anjuman-i-Punjab, and at the same time inescapable influence of the environments created by new education. He displays such ubiquitous influence in his long poem and the poems of nature. His *Rajmeet arte Rana Surat Singh* was published in 1905, embodying the principles of Gurbani for spiritual attainment and the allegorical flight of the soul to the eternal Being. He expresses buoyant faith in life here and hereafter. Knowledge is desirable and even essential for man but in this allegory important role in human affairs is reserved for Love. Like Dante he brings in his story the personified abstractions in a meaningful way. It is an allegory of lofty vision and ideal conception. For the first time he has employed unrhymed metre for a long poem in Punjabi, introducing in order to justify his choice by a long preface, mentioning in it his knowledge of the use of blank verse in Latin, Greek and English. Though written in his youthful years, by this book alone he deserves a merited place in the library of the world. The lyrical genius of Bhai Vir Singh emerged with this very first publication in the book form. The description of "sleep" and "storm" is reminiscent of the best lyrics of Wordsworth and Shelley. He wrote lyrics depicting his various moods, his wanderings in the hills and his sports with the springs. The lyrical intensity in the poems collected in *Lehran de Har* (Wreathes of Waves - 1921), *Mastak Hulare* (Ecstatic Swings - 1922) and *Bijlian de Har* (Wreathes of Lightning-1927) unites universality of his feelings with unity of form, turning as the lyric must turn on a simple thought feeling or situation.

Bhai Vir Singh was a poet of nature, alive to the beauty of the world of nature around him. With his receptive soul and gift of insight, from the very beginning he rejected the dualism of matter and spirit. The description of plains surrounded by the high mountains, the grandeur of the tall trees, the music of the sounding cataracts and the leaped flow of the clear water find beautiful expression of divine drenched poet. In his treatment of nature as the book of divine truths, was the source of phenomena which are the language of God. He elucidates the idea of projection of God in indefinite forms; in a small but significant poem *Trel Tupka* (Dew Drop). This realisation of the projecting will of God brings the poet into intense intimacy with the spirit pervading the universe, a spirit which he senses all the time, and the existence of which never needs to be questioned. There is a colourful pantheism running through the poems written after sojourn in Kashmir. They represent his conception of faculty of intuition which leads to man's consciousness of their identification with the divine mind and to the ecstatic contemplation of the divinity as the source of their highest joy which the Dutch philosopher Spinoza called the "intellectual love of God." The secret of happiness of the flower is that it does not give up the eternal ecstasy (*Kheri*). The poet maintains that the pleasures of prolific nature alone can chasten the morals and manner of society. The *Anant* (Measureless) and the invisible in the visible aspects of nature has something of mother's mind that generates soothing consolation to the suffering souls.

Bhai Vir Singh

The collection of mystic poems *Mere Sajan Jeo* was published in 1953. There is the yearning of the soul to pass from the spheres of sorrow and enter the zone of the Being. These poems are impregnated with delicate subtleties and producing vibrations in the soul that words can little explain.

Bhai Vir Singh started writing tracts for the Khalsa Tract Society founded by him 1893 aiming at social and religious reform. He shook off the scholarly idiom with ponderous effects of Sanskrit Bani and Sadh Bhasa and employed simple language in descriptive and narrative style. The simplicity in narration, the suggestive emotions and the poetic rhythm are the main virtues of his prose style. The series of supplement tracts on the lives of the Gurus, compiled later on in book forms is an important step in the evolution of Punjabi prose biography. Though depending upon the old legends and the current *sakhis*, he lends them the freshness with picturesque language. He is scholarly, balanced, clear and refreshingly factual. His articles published in the weekly *Khalsa Samachar*, founded by him in 1899, contained probably for the first time a variety of subjects of high seriousness. The merit of his prose lies in discarding the conventional artificiality of the language which marked his immediate predecessors.

Bhai Vir Singh published three romances based upon the historical situations — *Sundri* (1897), *Bijay Singh* (1899), *Satwant Kaur* (1900) the background being the 18th century period of convulsive strain, the most crucial period for the Sikh community when the mere survival was in danger. This was the period when the Sikh peasantry leaving their ploughs and ploes, the women shaking off their feminine modesty jumped in to fight against the unscrupulous rulers. It was a thrilling past for the writer to make an effective background for his stories to inculcate among the Sikhs, the pride for their past, at the time when they were beginning to doubt the achievements of their ancestors. Romantic in style and romantic in treatment, his plots are the results of the considered scheme. His characters with their adventures represent a point of view and act his dramas. He had his preferences and prejudices. But his romances written in rhythmic prose and establishing the ethical excellence of the Sikh religion, though appear insipid with the passing away of a peculiar state of mental fly are the forerunners of Punjabi novel, decidedly in medium if not in content. He completed another socio-religious novel *Baba Nanak Singh* in 1974. Besides these literary ventures he annotated, edited and interpreted various volumes pertaining to Sikh history and Sikh literature. He published a dictionary of Guru Granth Sahib and edited rare books on Sikhism.

This poet laureate of the Punjab received the Sahitya Akademy award in 1953. The Panjab University conferred upon him the degree of Oriental Learning in 1949. He was nominated to the Vidhan Parishad in 1952 and was honoured with Padam Bhushan in 1956. He was rightly recognised and adored and enjoyed full public reverence till he died in 1957. He did for Punjabi literature what Michael Madhusudan Dutt did for Bengali language and literature. He brought grace to the Punjabi language as did Subramania Bharati in Tamil.

A charge is generally levelled against Bhai Vir Singh that his

(Continued on page 9)

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The Desert Blooms
A Human Achievement

By : Dr. Amrik Singh Cherma,
Agricultural Commissioner, Government of India

The happy transition that the Rajasthan Canal waters are bringing about in the arid and desolate desert speak of human achievement overcoming the centuries-old displeasure of nature. The Canal which is being built through herculean engineering efforts is converting simultaneously the 8,000 square miles tract of waterless wastes into lush green fields.

The Canal is not complete as yet. But the impatient generation dedged by rain so long, cannot wait. A total of 8,96,000 acres of dry lands is already getting the Beas water. The inhospitable terrain was not the natural habitat of agricultural communities. Nomadic cattle breeders who used to stay in these tracts made the 12-per-square-mile population. However, in the last decade, a total of 30,000 families were induced to migrate the area for agricultural settlement through land allotment. The population of the area has naturally registered an increase of 72.9 per cent according to 1971 Census.

The narrow corridor on the Indo-Pak border has stupendous problems of colonisation and development.

Here we get a clean slate. So far, 307 new villages have been identified on the ground and Master Plans for development are prepared for 135. Residential plots are being demarked. There are no grouped water wells in the area but each populated area is to be given a sanitary storage well (diggi), to be filled with canal water. So far, 135 such diggis have been constructed and 96 more are in progress. The upper region Canal Colony has sufficient primary diggis. With the increase in population, pipe water supply schemes are drawn for two villages. In addition, similar two schemes are under progress in Mundi areas.

The educational and medical needs of the area have also to be met. Twenty-seven Ayurvedic Aushdhalayas have therefore been opened. Two Primary Health Centres and two dispensaries are already functioning in the area. Three Mobile Hospitals are rendering further medical service in the area. On the educational side, eighty-one primary schools were opened during the last eight years. Thirty of them are lodged in modern buildings. By the time the present primary school students come out, two middle schools would get ready for them.

An agricultural community needs marketing facilities and agro-services primarily. Two market towns with scientifically constructed storage godowns and modern market yards have been developed and 15 more are in the process of development.

A network of roads, linking the new 'Abadi' centres and Mandis (markets) with area consumption centres and rail heads has been partly laid. So far, 1,190 miles forced road have been completed and 71 miles is in progress. With major basic necessities of life and an infrastructure for economic growth laid, the region is well set to achieve an agricultural breakthrough.

Large quantities of improved seeds and fertilisers have been pumped in through experimental, cooperative and private agencies. Loans for tractors have been advanced on concessional basis. Similarly, cultivators are being encouraged and helped to execute land levelling, contour bunding, water courses and field channels lining, shelter belts and other soil conservation and land development schemes. Lengths of water courses and field channels have been laid and other steps based on research have been undertaken to modernise agriculture.

The area which used to produce negligible quantities of kharif crops is slowly turning into a granary in the midst of the desert. The annual production of cereals has been going up. Starting from 122 lakh quintals a year, it has reached 3.455 lakh quintals a year now. And the agricultural produce ranges from the best quality rice to wheat, mustard, jowar and cotton.

After giving an impetus to the production of cereals, the area is preparing for production of commercial crops. An ambitious scheme of growing long-staple cotton has been drawn this year and an area of 21,000 acres has been brought under cotton. This scheme is a part of the Crash Programme launched for termination of imports of cotton. The command area under the Rajasthan Canal is ideally suited and offers a great potential for growing cotton. With the development of this area and the irrigation water becoming perennial, the tract is likely to produce high quality cottons and turn the desert area as Egypt of India. Similarly, a scheme for growing oil-seeds, especially groundnuts is about to be launched.

The area already grows Montgomery variety of Malta, a citrus fruit. A more ambitious citrus fruit development programme will be launched when the canal system becomes a perennial source of water in 1974.

Sand dunes in the fields and on the periphery of the canals are to be stabilised. This is being achieved through mulching and planting processes. Apart from this, distributing measures are being taken to prevent blocking of the canals. So far, 1540 hectares of sand-dune area has been stabilised and on 980 hectares of land and 3,905 kilo metres of canal side plantation has been done. Similarly, plantation is being done on road sides for protection against wind blown sand. The fuel and timber requirements are met by the forests attached to every new settlement with 50 bighas of command land. Twenty-five such forests are being taken up for development this year.

A region where only dry Bajra and Moth were produced, large quantities of wheat, rice and good cotton grow now. Side by side with acacia or juliflora, the age-old trees of this area, are seen now the eucalyptus and the seesam. Maltas are multiplying fast and the region hums with multifarious human activity, transport, trade and industry.

What has been achieved is a fraction of what is planned in broader perspective. However, a smart beginning has been made. The desert has been fully harnessed. It blooms and certainly it will blossom in course of time.

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The Romance Of Seeds

By : Shri O. S. Rakesh,
Public Relations Officer, National Seeds Corporation

You just drop a seed from a height of six feet for six times, and Lo! the seed may be dead. The injury suffered may not be visible from outside but it would certainly reflect serious injury to the inner-coat of the seed rendering it lifeless and not regaining life even after having been allowed to put up with the rich and fertile soil.

The seed is simple and purely living organism breathing with life and having the capacity to produce a beautiful plant. It is very sensitive, and casual and rough treatment meted-out to it might damage the very posture of the seed. The seed likes to be clinically examined like any human body and likes to be treated gently and honourably. Pure seed, therefore, does not like the company of other seeds (varieties), diseased and unhealthy seeds. Good seed likes to avoid extremely hot and humid weather, likes to be housed in air-conditioned compartment in order to give its fullest worth and very much likes to be handled delicately and carefully while going from one place to another. These conditions alone keep the seed happy and in turn such good seed promises prosperity to the farmer.

No wonder the seed has become very important object of scientific research in the twentieth century. The very plant life is determined by the capability and quality of the seed. In India also scientific research has made comprehensive study of all qualities of good seed since 1929. But the secret that the seed is really full of romance of life has been revealed only during the last few years. This romance is virtually the essence of prosperity of the farmers and in fact the country as a whole. Necessarily a complete organisation had to be established for looking after this interest of the seed.

The National Seeds Corporation was created in 1963 for pioneering the growth of good seed industry in the country. NSC today acts as a link and symbol of farm revolution in India.

The National Seeds Corporation, right from the beginning realised importance of the romantic traits of seeds and imparted the knowledge of the scientific seed industry to the farmers and other beneficiaries. With the active cooperation of national and international agencies and organisations, NSC brought home to the Indian farmer and others the know-how to differentiate between the improved variety and ordinary type, and also between quality seed and mere grain. The farmer was conveyed the scientific message of an improved seed constituted by genetic and physical factors. He is today convinced that the genetic factor is represented by *improved variety possessing high yielding ability*, and the physical factor by *good quality* of the seed. The improved seed thus is of superior variety and of high quality.

The improved variety means that the seed possesses genetic potentiality for higher yields compared to the local or currently used varieties. It is resistant to pests and diseases, gives bigger response to better conditions of growth, is resistant to adverse conditions of environment like drought, flood, waterlogging, salinity etc, has suitable period of maturity, and its quality has vital acceptance of market and the consumers.

The physical characteristics of a good seed are represented by the purity of the seed (i.e. freedom from seeds of other varieties of the same crop or the other crops), good germination; uniformity of the seed in size, colour and weight; freedom from other extraneous matters (such as weed seed, dirt, chaff and other mixtures) and it possesses prescribed optimum moisture content for safe storage.

NSC takes due care to see that "the good seed" produced and supplied by it or produced under its supervision should possess the above characters.

To ensure this, NSC undertook the function of promoting a sound seed industry in India in both public as well as private sectors by undertaking the following jobs :

1. established a certifying seed agency for the entire country;
2. started acting as a foundation seed stocking agency to meet the nation's requirement of foundation seed of high-yielding varieties ;
3. established a net work of seed processing plants for scientific processing of seeds throughout the country,
4. arranged training courses to train the necessary staff of various private and public seed producing agencies,
5. arranged sale of certified seed, produced in the country ;
6. gave necessary assistance to state Governments and private seed industry to organise seed production on modern lines, and
7. provided necessary extention and publicity services to the growing seed industry.

Leaving nothing to chance, NSC in order to ensure absolute good quality in seed produced by it or under its supervision set-up its own quality control seed test laboratory to thoroughly check up the seed samples in accordance with the international standards, before allowing the seeds to be packed for distribution to agriculturists. NSC's quality control seed testing laboratory has now the proud privilege of being a member of International Seed Testing Association.

During the course of setting up modern seed processing plants all over the country NSC helped small and medium scale industries in taking up indigenous production of seed processing equipments by supplying them designs, prototypes, necessary technical know-how and continued guidance. It is significant to mention that today the country is self-sufficient in machinery and equipment required for setting up of processing plants whereas hardly 10 years back the processing plants were being set up entirely with imported equipments. Over 100 processing plants have now been put up with indigenous equipment.

That the ordinary seed producer and even a farmer should learn to have romance the seed and treat it in the manner it deserves, NSC has made available all types of technical know-how in the form of published books, brochures etc. on seed processing, seed storage, seed marketing and seed quality assurance.

Today Indian farmer knows that magic good seed has played in his prosperity. He has come to realise that good seed is one of the most important inputs and the least costly "ingredient" when compared to other inputs, like fertilisers, irrigation etc. "The seed" is so vital to the life of agriculture that even the most expensive fertilizers, irrigation and human effort can go waste without the "romance of good seed".

"Seeds of Quality" published by Government of India summarises the miracle of improved seed".

To quote —

"In 1967-68 we produced 95 million tonnes of food grains. In 1968-69, inspite of pervasive drought conditions in many States, we managed to produce almost as much 94 million tonnes. This shows that the spread of scientific agriculture and especially the coverage of more and more areas by good seeds have been able to offset conditions of drought which in a country of India's dimensions cannot be ruled out in some areas or other even in the best years. Our whole salvation therefore lies in the use of the best seeds.

Indian scientists have made a great contribution in providing us with the best seeds. Their contribution will now have to be matched by that of the farmer, each dealer and seed producer".

And today the romantic story of improved Indian seeds is not confined to India shores alone. It is beckoning the attention of outside markets also. NSC and other seed producing agencies in India are now well equipped to produce improved seeds not only to meet country's requirements but also to make available seeds of selected varieties for export. Thus starts the story of romance of seed.

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Letter to the Editor

Safeguards For Minorities

Sir, I congratulate you and Sardar Hukam Singh for your courage in exposing the discriminatory and communal approach of the Hindu National leaders like Nehru and Patel towards the Sikhs at the time of framing of Indian Constitution, through series of articles published in your journal. Sardar Hukam Singh has rightly pointed out that Sikh claims for special safeguards as a minority were never given a serious consideration and these were rejected under a pre-planned scheme ingeniously carried out. But the fault lies not solely with these Hindu leaders. Sikh leadership failed to build up any pressure of public opinion in support of their demands and the Sikh members of the constituent assembly did not assert their separate identity at the meetings. Instead of making out a special claim for the Sikhs, as Sardar Hukam Singh has very scholarly done now, the Sikh members then themselves linked them demand with the demands of Muslims and Christians although there was no rational ground for doing so. After the creation of Pakistan, which was achieved on the plea that no safeguards can adequately protect the rights of the Muslims, the Muslims left in India may not have needed any further safeguards but there was no ground for refusing these safeguards to the Sikhs who had a claim as the sovereignty of Punjab. Patel exploited this link and by luring away a few members of the other minority communities defrauded the Sikhs. What happened at the meeting is perhaps correctly recorded by famous journalist Durga Das in his book "India from Curzon To Nehru And After" at page 243 where he writes:

"The most delicate issue related to safeguards for minorities. Azad wanted reservation of seats for the Muslims and other minorities within the framework of general electorates. Patel opposed such safeguards. Nehru left it to Patel to jump the hurdle as chairman of the Advisory Committee on Minorities. Two women members played a key role in this high-strung drama. Amrit Kaur, speaking for the Indian Christians, said that reservation of seats and weightage based on religion or sect would lead to fragmentation of the Indian Union. *The Sikhs demanded the same treatment as given To the Muslims.*

After the Committee had wrestled with the problem for weeks, Patel decided to clinch the issue at its final meeting. He called on Begum Aizaz Rasul of Lucknow to state the Muslim view. She was a zealous Muslim League worker before partition and had even gone to the length of giving up Saree and adopting the costume worn by the Begums of Oudh. The Muslims left behind in India, she said seriously, were an integral part of the nation and needed no safeguards. Patel seized this crucial moment to declare that the Muslims were unanimously in favour of joint electorate and adjourned the meeting."

The crux of all our sacrifices is that we fight shy of pleading the case of our community in a straight forward manner lest we may be dubbed as communal. Before partition, the demand for Azad Punjab failed to gain popular support because it was presented as a move to counter the demand for Pakistan. We failed to gain anything during deliberations for transfer of power because our representatives failed to assert the separate identity of the community and simply dittoed the Hindu leaders. Until we give up this strategy of presenting our demands under the cover of secularism, we will continue to suffer. We have failed to learn a lesson from our past mistakes. Unless we decide to come out of the ivory tower of secularism in which we are caged, there is no hope for the coming generations.

—Gurmit Singh
Advocate

SIRSA

BHAI VIR SINGH

(Continued from page 6)

writing does not reflect the social and political milieu of his times. He is accused of being an escapist entrapped in the web of his own concepts and enjoying the lullabies in the lap of nature when the country was undergoing the convulsive transformation. These critics base their arguments on the fact that he was not moved to write a single line in his voluminous production about the ghastly Jallianwala massacre. Not even in a single poem he has described the tragedy of human sufferings. And that the 'still sad music of humanity' had no effect on his muse. But all such arguments sink into insignificance when we realise that poetry is written out of an experience of the poet's self, not necessarily experience visible to the naked and 'vulgar' eye. The sense of poet's vocation cannot find its way into the life and mode of an intellectual unless he is willing to accept that the spiritual climate which he either creates or which surrounds him during the process of transmission of emotions. His mystic probes into the inner consciousness where Being and Becoming synthesise surly are beyond the ken and capacity of the academic critics. And writings of Bhai Vir Singh may not appeal to the intellect of the academic critics; they do stimulate the soul impregnating it with devotional ecstasy leading her from joy to joy.

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Our Men In Uniform

Jawans, Sailors And Airmen

The popular image of the Jawan as an infantry soldier with a rifle slung on his shoulder standing vigil on the border does not tell the story of the long and varied training given to him. While every Jawan is taught how to use the rifle, there are different kinds of Jawans: from the basic infantryman to the sophisticated technician. Broadly, they are divided into Arms & Services. Those belonging to the Arms are infantrymen, cavalrymen of the Armoured Corps, gunners of the Artillery, sappers of the Corps of Engineers and signallers of the Corps of Signals. The Services again range from the Army Service Corps, which looks after the supply and transport needs of the Army, to technicians of the Corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers who maintain and repair all mechanical, electrical and electronic equipment in the Army; or from the men of the Army Ordnance Corps whose job is to provide "food" for the guns to teachers of the Army Education Corps.

The basic training of a Jawan takes place at a Regimental Centre. While each Regiment of the Infantry has its Regimental Centre, the Corps has more than one depending on its size. The period of basic training lasts nearly a year. The recruit is taught the rudiments of soldiering — drill, weapon-training and minor tactics. Above all, he is taught discipline. He, however, continues to learn throughout his service in the Army.

The minimum age of recruitment to the Army is 17. The upper age of recruitment varies from 21 to 27 in different arms and services. Every Jawan is committed to complete his "colour" service before he can leave the Army, the period of colour service varying from ten to 18 years. Promising Jawans can aspire to become commissioned officers.

The Navy, whose traditions date back to centuries, shot into limelight during the Indo-Pak War in 1971. The war provided the first opportunity since independence to the Indian Navy to prove its operational efficiency. By carrying out daring attacks to thwart threats to our mercantile marine, ports and harbours, the Navy blazed a new trail of glory.

There are different kinds of Sailors and different modes of entry for them. Sailors can join the Navy as Boys, Artificers or directly as junior Sailors. Boys and Artificers join between 14½ and 17½ years while direct entry Sailors are recruited between 17 and 20 years of age. Entrants are trained in the art of seamanship and in the operation of anti-aircraft, anti-submarine and other weapons. Visual and wireless communication by semaphore, morse, lamps and radio is the responsibility of the communication Sailors. The duties of aviation Sailors include handling, operations and maintenance of modern naval aircraft, both ashore and on board the aircraft-carrier. They are also trained as aircraft technicians. Engine room Sailors perform the very arduous duties of operating the boiler and engine-room machinery. The electrical Sailors are trained to operate all electrical and electronic equipment. In addition, there are Sailors who belong to the supply branch, the medical branch and the regulating branch. Training in seamanship is given at Cochin, Vishakhapatnam and Goa, while every branch has its own training establishments. There are avenues for able and efficient Sailors to become commissioned officers.

The youngest of the three Services in the Indian Air Force. It has the maximum number of trades—forty-three, categorised in five groups. The IAF uses highly sophisticated aircraft, armament systems, equipment and technology and it is the job of Airmen to service, maintain, store and supply these items at the highest level of efficiency. An Airman is initially enrolled for a period of 15 years regular service, followed by six years in the reserve. A certain number of them is granted extension of service for six years. On completion of 21 years of regular service, subsequent extensions of service for a period of three years at a time are granted.

The training period of an Airman extends from 32 to 82 weeks depending upon his trade. However, training in the Air Force does not cease, as, in order to cope with new equipment and constant developments in the field of avionics, an Airman has to keep himself professionally up-to-date. There is a constant programme of education and Airmen are frequently sent for further studies. Avenues are there for them to become Commissioned Officers.

Our men in uniform have made their contribution in areas other than defence also. They have helped in the development of border areas and gone to the succour of people affected by natural calamities. Their impartial behaviour has won spontaneous admiration whenever they have been called upon to assist in maintaining law and order. Above all, as citizens, Jawans, Sailors and Airmen have set an example worthy of emulation.

Present-day Eye Surgery

By : Dr. I. Goel

When we talk of eye surgery we can think of either in terms of advanced countries of the world or India. Today, in India, there is no eye operation that is not being performed by some surgeon or the other, according to the availability of equipment and material.

Surgical Instruments

The eye surgery today is more advanced than that of past decades because of greater overall development in the scientific technology. The surgical instruments that are made today are finer and better e. g., the needles are small up to 5 mm. length and so fine that it is possible to take a bite of 1/10 of millimeter; knives have finished smooth edges, examined microscopically. At the same time, these fine and precise instruments are very costly. Because of this fine and small needles and ultra fine silk sutures, it becomes necessary to use magnifying glasses. Instead of the ordinary pair of magnifying glasses, the present-day trend is to use the microscope for magnification during the operation. In the same manner, pair of forceps that had 1 mm fineness at its tip now has 1/2 mm. fine tip or in exceptional circumstances 1/4 mm fineness, if there are two teeth at the end. Previously with a good cataract knife, it was possible to do 20 to 35 incisions for cataract operations. Today a good cataract knife worth its reputation does about 100 cataract operations. Thus the technology of making better, finer and more precise instruments has advanced a great deal to help the surgical skill.

New Surgical Techniques

Some twenty years back, a commonly known operation of corneal grafting was only heard of; today it has become a well-known and well-practised surgical technique. Very recently surgical treatment has developed to save the eye-ball itself from losing total eyesight in cases of corneal ulcers by grafting the donor cornea on cases of perforated corneal ulcers or ulcers not responding to medical treatment. Thus perforated corneal ulcers that would have surely resulted in a blind eye, today can be treated surgically and with good eyesight, as a result cornea can be grafted as Lamellar keratoplasty. To dissect the partial thickness of cornea from the host—i.e., the patient, and the donor eye i.e. the deadman's eye—requires very thin and very sharp corneal-spatter and a very fine pair of forceps. A fraction of a millimeter thickness of the cornea is dissected and grafted.

A further advance in recent years has been the transplantation of the retina and the vitreous, specially in cases of retinal detachment. The very concept that the vitreous (a jelly like fluid) that used to be considered as very prone to infection, now proved to be self-sterilising, has changed and hence the chances of infection are much less.

The advances in physics and optical instruments have brought about the possibility of coagulation by light, called photocoagulation, as different from heat, electricity or chemicals. Thus bleeding vessels in the retina can be choked or necessary adhesions between retina and choroid can be brought about by photocoagulation equipment. Photocoagulation equipment is so prohibitive and costly that very few medical colleges have this equipment.

CRYO-Surgery

Another method cauterising small areas, has developed by producing a very cold (frozen) tip of a needle which in principle is similar to the refrigeration cooling method. This technique is known as cryosurgery. It is used in cases of detachment of the retina again to produce the adhesions (i.e. reattachment) between retina and choroid. Because of the adhesiveness of the very cold frozen tip of the needle, it is also used to remove the lens in cataract extraction. Thus cryo-surgery is another but comparatively more recent advancement in the technique of surgery.

Skin Grafting

In the reconstructive surgery of eye-lids and other adjoining areas, the use of skin grafting method has further developed by incorporating liquid silicone and silicone sponge under the skin to produce the necessary cosmetic effect. The silicone sponge is more often used for the surgery of the nose, chin and other improvements in appearances. Something that had hit the headlines last year was 'keratoprosthesis' an artificial cornea grafted on the eye of a blind person so that he could see.

Well, the success of the operation depends on the acceptability or rejection of this artificial cornea by the tissues of the eye. Until now, there is gradually a longer and longer period of acceptance of this artificial cornea, which by itself is a very costly piece of button-shape like a collarbone polymer. It can be compared to the success of heart transplants and is still in the age of successful experimentation. This experimentation is being done not only in America, England, Europe, and other countries but in India, too.

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The Seym And Co-operation

By : Prof. Alojzy Melich,
Seym Deputy, Vice-Chairman of the Economic Plan, Budget and Finance Committee

A marked increase has been noted in recent years in the role of the Seym in Poland's civic endeavour. This is a result of the systematic improvement of the system of government in People's Poland. The Seym is the supreme organ of state authority elected by the entire nation in a secret ballot of universal direct and equal character. In this way power remains in the hands of the working class, and is exercised by representatives of that class in the Seym and on people's councils. Seym deputies bear a tremendous responsibility before their electorates which at any moment can even recall a deputy or councillor when they decide he had lost their confidence.

The Seym's prerogatives are not of a formal nature. It appoints the prime minister, the government and the individual ministers, the chairman of the Supreme Chamber of Control, and it elects the Council of State. The latter acts for the Seym in between its sessions, performing also the function of a collective head of state (it is elected from among the Seym deputies).

The Council of State is subordinated to the Seym, while the Council of Ministers is responsible to and informs the Seym about its activity. This means that the Seym concentrates in its hands all state authority, that it is a sovereign organ, not dependent on any other state organ. It executes its powers in particular through its legislative activity, that is the adoption of laws. It exerts control over all organs of authority.

Its term of office is four years. The present Seym, in its 6th term of office began work on March 19th, 1972. As in previous terms, its deputies were elected in multimandate constituencies. There were 80 of them during the last elections, with an average of 3 to 5 seats (the average figure was 4.75 seats per one constituency). The candidates are nominated by National Unity Front Committees. Their number in a given constituency must not be higher than twice the number of seats. Elected is the candidate who receives an absolute majority of valid votes, provided the voting attendance in his constituency is no less than 50%. If these requirements are not met, the Council of State announces new elections. Should a deputy's mandate expire (e.g. on his death), the Seym may decide that his mandate goes to the next candidate who had received the next highest vote in the election.

The Seym has also its collective executive body called the Seym Presidium which is composed of the Seym Marshal and three vice-marshals representing all political parties. Deputies are divided in three deputies' clubs according to their party affiliation, the Polish United Workers' Party, the United Peasant Party and the Democratic Party. Moreover, there are also three deputies' circles operating on slightly different principles, other than party membership, which are composed of catholic deputies.

Members of Seym Presidium and chairmen of the deputies' clubs form a so-called Convention of Seniors, which has co-opted representatives of the deputies' circles. The task of this Convention is to have consultations on Seym activity in inter-party forum.

Polish Parliamentary Mission headed by Mr. Edward Babiuch visited India recently on the invitation of the Indian Parliament. In the photograph they are seen placing wreaths on the Samadhi of Mahatma Gandhi.

Supervisory controlling function is performed by the Seym through its standing committees, of which there are twenty two at present. The work of these committees goes much beyond their actual terms of reference. It has become a practice of late to hold meetings on selected problems (e.g. foreign policy, long range housing programme). The fundamental task of the committees is

a) to express opinions on matters transmitted to them by the Seym or its Presidium

b) to perform certain executive functions of the Seym as regards state organs.

In particular, the standing committees analyse the work of ministries, state and economic administration, listen to reports of government representatives, etc. The increased role of these committees may be seen in the growing number of desiderata which are the result of discussions held during their meetings, and are directed to the Council of State, the Government, the Chairman of the Supreme Chamber of Control and the Attorney General. The debates of the committees are in fact business like discussions on essential economic, social or practical problems. More than once the discussions are heated, and the desiderata based on them are of essential importance to bettering the work of state organs improved. Even though in distinction from the decisions adopted by the Seym, the desiderata are not binding, state organs adopt a business-like attitude towards them, using most of them in their activity. This is, therefore, a form of very operative cooperation in the administration of the state. In this way representatives of the nation exert a concrete influence on the solution of frequently pressing problems. A Seym deputy has also, of course, the right of interpellation which must be answered within 7 days, or the so-called deputies' questions which are much simpler in form and procedure.

A particularly important role is played by the Economic Plan, Budget and Finance Committee, and as regards international problems by the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Foreign Trade Committee. Although the various parts of economic plans and budget are deliberated with the other standing committees concerned, the Economic Plan, Budget and Finance Committee coordinates this work; it carries out both an overall and synthetic evaluation of plans and budgets in the preparatory stage, and the evaluation of their execution.

Seym deputies take also a great interest in socio-economic problems, that is in increased trade exchange and development of economically underdeveloped countries in order to liquidate the growing disproportion between them and highly developed countries. Like India, Poland stands in the forefront, together with "third world" countries, against all manifestations of discrimination, use of force against smaller countries. She is in favour of progressive, non-capitalist development of many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Polish parliamentarians endeavour to discuss in the Union's forum problems of economic cooperation, especially regional scientific and technological exchange, problems concerned with the abolition of discriminatory barriers.

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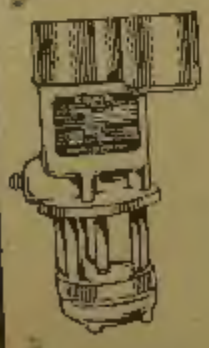

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